

\$175,000 Said Offered For Ray Story Film Rights

By HAL COOPER

NEW YORK (AP) — Percy Foreman, the lawyer who advised James Earl Ray to plead guilty to the Martin Luther King Jr., assassination, said today an offer of \$175,000 has been made for the movie rights to the story.

Foreman said the offer was made by Carlo Ponti, film producer and husband of Italian actress Sophia Loren, to William Bradford Huie, Ray's official biographer.

"AND I'LL get 60 per cent of it," Foreman said in an interview in his New York hotel.

In addition to the flat fee, Ponti would pay 13 per cent of the gross receipts of the movie.

Foreman, of Houston, Tex., said Look magazine had guaranteed another \$85,000 for Huie's series of articles on Ray's life, and that he was entitled to 60 per cent of that also.

THE ATTORNEY said that his 60 per cent share of the movie, book and magazine rights might total \$400,000 or so, but that he would take only the \$150,000 agreed upon with Ray.

Foreman said he would put anything above that figure into trust for Ray's family.

"I didn't fix the fee, he (Ray) fixed it," Foreman said.

HE SAID he advised Ray to plead guilty "because I believed he would be electrocuted if he didn't."

Ray was given a sentence of 99 years in the Tennessee state penitentiary. He has since signified his intention of asking a rehearing at which he could withdraw his guilty plea and elect to stand trial by jury.

Ray's brother, Jerry, was quoted by the Nashville Tennessean yesterday as saying that the accused slayer was placed under financial pressure by Foreman to plead guilty and take a prison sentence.

"FOREMAN SAID he would take \$150,000 if my brother pleaded guilty, but he wanted everything he would ever earn

if he didn't," the Tennessean quoted Jerry Ray as saying.

Foreman described this as "a bunch of —."

In Savannah, Ga., Ray's latest lawyer, J.B. Stoner, said his Ku Klux Klan connections would help Ray's case.

"THEY SHOW I'm a loyal white man and the white people of Shelby County are for white supremacy," Stoner said. Memphis, where the murder occurred, is in Shelby County.

Stoner asserted that King "brought about his own death with his activities across the country" and added:

"He was a troublemaker."

Commented Robert B. James, chairman of the Memphis City Council: "He's just making a lot of trouble that we don't need. He's certainly not welcome around here when he talks like that."

5-1 3-24-69

MONDAY



PRISON VISIT—Attorney J. B. STONER whispers to guard J. W. CHILTON after Stoner's visit with James Earl Ray in the Tennessee State Prison in Nashville Saturday. Ray, who has pleaded guilty to assassinating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., has retained Stoner to represent him in some planned civil lawsuits.